



## KAZAKHSTAN & TURKMENISTAN | THE HEART OF CENTRAL ASIA

### TOUR

April 30<sup>th</sup> - May 18<sup>th</sup> 2024  
19 Nights

### OVERVIEW

On our most adventurous 19-night adventure, we will start in the new capital of Kazakhstan, [Astana](#) and finish in the ostentatious city of [Ashgabat](#), Turkmenistan.

In between these two fascinating cities, we will travel by road, rail, and air as we adventure and explore parts of Kazakhstan only a few have seen before. We will be heading to the industrial base of [Karaganda](#), the infamous [Semipalatinsk](#) (in two words; Gulags and Nukes), and [Kurchatov](#) - the Los Alamos of the USSR, where the Red Bomb was developed and tested. Plus, we will even visit '[The Polygon](#)'; the vast nuclear testing range full of abandoned measuring platforms, bunkers, craters, buried machinery, and the scenic yet chilling 'Atomic Lake'.

**Please Note:** the situation vis-a-vis access to the Semipalatinsk Nuclear Polygon is very much changeable with no notice. So while we do intend to run the tour as scheduled here there is a chance that things may change and we have to adjust to which areas we visit, where we stay overnight, and so on. We have explored this area thoroughly though and have redundancies and backup plans in place, so we can still assure all visitors that they will experience as much access to the site as possible when they visit with Koryo Tours.

We will make sure to visit the main sites during our time in Turkmenistan such as [Ashgabat](#) and the [Darvaza Gas Crater \(Gates of Hell\)](#), but also take you off the beaten path to really experience and understand Turkmenistan. **Meet local people, learn about their lives and history, their differences and commonalities.**

**The Experts in Travel to Rather Unusual Destinations.**

info@koryotours.com | +86 10 6416 7544 | www.koryotours.com  
27 Bei Sanlitun Nan, Chaoyang District, 100027, Beijing, China



## HIGHLIGHTS

- Combine Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan for the ultimate adventure
- Astana | Almaty | Nuclear Polygon – USSR’s testing range for atmospheric and underground nukes
- Ashgabat | Central Asia's most unusual capital, and the city with the most white-marble clad buildings in the world
- Darvaza Gas Crater - This Giant burning crater known as the ‘Mouth of Hell’

*Please note that the itinerary may differ slightly to what is below but your tour leader will do their best to ensure that as much is covered as possible and will also add in extras when there is time such as a visit to a local bar or a funfair. We will make the most of your time on the tour to guarantee the experience of a lifetime.*



## April 30<sup>th</sup> – TUESDAY (ARRIVAL DAY – ASTANA)

- **Flights to Astana** (airport code NQZ) arrive from many international destinations – let us know which flight you will be on, and we will arrange your pick-up and transfer to the hotel. Arriving even earlier is, of course, fine and can be accommodated – this would give you time to settle in, fight jet-lag, etc
- Today we start the tour with a **group dinner** in a restaurant with a stunning view over the city, coordination and briefing session, before the adventure ahead!

**Overnight:** Astana- Kazakhstan's shiny new Capital City!

**Meals included:** Dinner

## May 1<sup>st</sup> – WEDNESDAY (ASTANA)

- **Astana** is a new city rightly famed for its unique approach to architecture; it piles together with a wide range of different styles and forms. The result is either a glimpse at the future of post-modern cities or a horrifying un-curated mish-mash of clashing buildings. Our tour today will include, but not be limited to, the sites listed below...
- **Bayterek Tower** – now the icon of the city, this ornate monument has a viewing platform 97 metres above the ground (1997 is when Astana become the capital city) and is designed to evoke a folk tale about a bird laying an egg in a tree. Amazing views over the city from here.
- **Palace of Peace and Reconciliation** – glass Pyramid from the eminent architect Norman Foster with the vague but noble aim of reconciling the world's faiths and ideologies and bringing an end to violence. Even if this goal remains elusive, it is a stunning building and worth exploring!
- **Hazret Sultan Mosque** – the biggest in Kazakhstan (and second in the region only to the monstrous Gypjak Mosque in Turkmenistan). Classically Islamic in style and Kazakh in décor, this impressive building can house up to 5000 worshippers at once.
- **Khan Shatyr Entertainment Centre** – perhaps the building that architecturally sums up modern Astana more than any other. Another Carbuncle/work-of-genius (delete as you prefer) from Norman Foster, this ingenious structure looking somewhat like a lop-sided tent that maintains an even temperature year-round and provides leisure facilities, shopping, entertainment in general.

**The Experts in Travel to Rather Unusual Destinations.**

info@koryotours.com | +86 10 6416 7544 | www.koryotours.com  
27 Bei Sanlitun Nan, Chaoyang District, 100027, Beijing, China



- **River Ishim** – we'll stroll the banks of this waterway in the centre of town, a good way to see a slice of local life and people enjoying their time. Remember that almost all of Astana's population are recent arrivals so a big mix of people from around the country and beyond can be met with here.

**Overnight:** Astana

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Lunch

**NOTE:** Today is May 1st, International Labour Day. Events may be happening in Astana and we will adjust the itinerary to include those that are available to the public. So the order of events will likely change on this day.

### **MAY 2<sup>nd</sup> – THURSDAY (AKMOL & KARAGANDA)**

- We take a drive out of the city to the nearby village of **Akmol**; home of the chilling [Museum of the Camp for Wives of Traitors to the Motherland](#) – A sensitively-done spot telling the story of the loyal (going to such a place could often be avoided with a divorce and public denunciation) women sent here when their husbands were persecuted.
- We set off on a 3 hour drive to the major city of Karaganda (lunch along the way)
- An introductory **walking tour of the city centre** - focusing on the architecture, history, and local culture of this city (all of which is varied and fascinating), we'll visit the central park as well and see and mix with locals spending leisure time here.
- [Karaganda](#) is a large city but with a very walkable centre – the Russian/Soviet influence here is strong and our guide (a local to this place) will tell us all about the city, you'll find it fascinating for sure! He can also recommend good spots for dinner/evening socialising/etc
- We will also visit a [local painter](#) - famed for having no arms and painting with the brush in his mouth. He sells his amazing work and can speak about his history growing up close to the nearby nuclear weapons testing area. His works can be purchased directly if anyone is interested in some amazing evocative and unique pieces.

**Overnight: Chaika Hotel** – amazing brutalist Soviet monstrosity. Real time-warp stuff. One part of the hotel was built specifically for the visit of Valentina Tereshkova, the first woman in space. The rooms are comfy and modern. The building itself is timeless!

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Lunch

**The Experts in Travel to Rather Unusual Destinations.**

info@koryotours.com | +86 10 6416 7544 | www.koryotours.com  
27 Bei Sanlitun Nan, Chaoyang District, 100027, Beijing, China



### MAY 3<sup>rd</sup> – FRIDAY (KARAGANDA)

- We drive an hour out to the museum of [KarLag](#), the local gulag system – a dark part of history indeed told through the rooms of this former **NKVD HQ**. State ‘enemies’, departed nationalities (a vast number of whom were dumped in Central Asia due to Stalin’s paranoia about enemies within – the largest numbers being Germans from the west and Koreans from the east. Their stories are told here in this chilling memorial to the all-too-recent evils.
- The village around this museum is made up largely of former Gulag barracks, admin buildings, and medical centres, we will take a look around and also visit the depressing cemetery for children who died in this cruel system.
- In the afternoon we offer the choice between free time to further explore Karaganda city or a trip to a former execution ground (what a choice, we know!) marked by tasteful and meaningful memorials to the various nationalities whose people were among the unfortunate souls to perish here.

**Overnight: Chaika Hotel**

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Lunch

### MAY 4<sup>th</sup> – SATURDAY (ASTANA/TRAIN RIDE)

- We return to Astana by road in the morning. A special lunch with a local family awaits us when we arrive back in the Kazakh capital (including Beshparkak - the national dish) and then time to shop for some supplies for the overnight train ride ahead of us.
- All aboard! We jump onto a **sleeper train** making its way through the night and across the country to the city of Kurchatov - home of the Soviet atomic weapons program. Comfy beds and a clean restaurant await us and rolling steppe outside the windows for this 800km journey.

**Overnight:** Onboard the train – 4 beds in each room. Comfortable and clean

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**The Experts in Travel to Rather Unusual Destinations.**

info@koryotours.com | +86 10 6416 7544 | www.koryotours.com  
27 Bei Sanlitun Nan, Chaoyang District, 100027, Beijing, China



## MAY 5<sup>th</sup> – SUNDAY (SEMEY/NUCLEAR POLYGON/KURCHATOV)

- We arrive in the morning in the eastern city of Semey and grab breakfast and the chance to leave our luggage in a local hotel (we will be back in a couple of days) - we then board our vehicles for an epic adventure in a fascinating and formerly forbidden area
- We go deep into the [Polygon](#) - heading for a wide range of sites associated with the Soviet nuclear weapons program - the **Atomic Lake**, abandoned and derelict **ICBM sites, underground bunkers**, buildings erected and then destroyed in nuclear test explosions, and much more. It will be an epic adventure and, of course, protective clothing is provided when required.
- We'll make a few stops on the way through but most significantly **Atomic Lake** - caused by a deep underground nuclear blast - this was in fact made deliberately and is known as the world's first and only use of industrial nuclear weapons. Find out what on earth they were thinking and meet some fishermen looking for three-eyed fish in the 180m deep lake.
- We'll have a *Roadside Picnic* (note to non-literature lovers, this is a joke - [read this book](#) and you will find some eerie similarities to this part of the trip) and continue to see some relics of the testing program. A local expert will also be with us to explain in detail, answer questions, etc.
- We arrive in [Kurchatov](#) and check in at our hotel, used mainly by scientists still studying the effects of all the nuclear tests in this region. Kurchatov was founded in 1947 simply to make Soviet Nuclear weapons a reality. Under the control of then KGB Chief Lavrentiy Beria and scientist Igor Kurchatov, this is where the arms race became a two-horse event.

**Overnight: Mayak Hotel** - another time-warp hotel with period furnishings and decor.

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## MAY 6<sup>th</sup> – MONDAY (KURCHATOV/CHAGAN)

- **Museum of the Semipalatinsk Test Site** - a detailed and deep explanation of what this place is, what happened here, and what effect their inventions can have. Some machines from that time are displayed here too. (note: this museum opens and closes at the whim of higher powers, so its opening cannot be 100% confirmed - if not open we will have a lecture on the history of the area at a different location)
- We board our vehicle and take a drive, deep into a formerly off-limits (very off limits!) area; the [Semipalatinsk Polygon](#) - nuclear testing ground chosen due to its remoteness, lack of population, and because it seemed

**The Experts in Travel to Rather Unusual Destinations.**

info@koryotours.com | +86 10 6416 7544 | www.koryotours.com  
27 Bei Sanlitun Nan, Chaoyang District, 100027, Beijing, China



like a good spot to blow a few things up. we provide protective gear of course

- Next stop is [Chagan](#) – once a deeply secret **long-range bomber base**. Now a deeply abandoned former long-range bomber base. See the massive runways, the remaining ammunition hangars, and the collapsing main buildings of the base. Plus the garrison town nearby which housed the base staff from 1954 to 1994 and now stands completely stripped like a spooky post-apocalyptic warning. A bit of UrbEx here
- We will visit a local family who used to live in Chagan - hear their stories of what it was like living at the front line of the Cold War so far in the USSR interior, and what things have been like for them since the base closed and their lives changed forever.

### Overnight | Mayak Hotel

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Lunch

### **MAY 7<sup>th</sup> – TUESDAY (SEMEY)**

- We leave Kurchaov and the Polygon/Test Field behind us today as we return to Semey. Semipalatinsk is actually the former name of this city; correctly it is now referred to as **Semey**, we explore with a city tour of this little-visited settlement.
- Once upon a time Semipalatinsk was a wealthy trading city, situated between China and Russia, and acted as a gateway to the Central Asian territories added to the Russian Empire in the 19th Century. We will explore mainly on foot and see buildings from various eras, statues and monuments, mosaics and a little-known part of history. All explained to us as we make our way on a short walking tour around this unexpectedly-charming place. Sites we visit include...
- **Lenin Alley** – a common sight in Kazakhstan’s smaller cities; a collection of Lenin’s in a nice park setting. The central piece is awe-inspiring.
- **Victory Park** – with statues, tank monument, and a hang-out place for locals.
- [Dostoyevsky Museum](#) – the titan of Russian Literature, as exiled out here in Semipalatinsk and this museum explains the importance of his works. *Pro-tip: read Crime and Punishment before your visit.*
- Free time from the later afternoon to explore the city, have an evening out away from the shadow of nuclear tests and enjoy a very unique place indeed.

**The Experts in Travel to Rather Unusual Destinations.**

info@koryotours.com | +86 10 6416 7544 | www.koryotours.com  
27 Bei Sanlitun Nan, Chaoyang District, 100027, Beijing, China



**Overnight: Semey Hotel** – very Soviet-style place with an aesthetic unlike what you may be used to! All the charm of the late-USSR but with free wifi! You'll love it!

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Lunch

### **MAY 8<sup>th</sup> – WEDNESDAY (SEMEY/ALMATY)**

- We will spend some time with a very special group of people - a local school who specialise in teaching disadvantaged children from more modest backgrounds. They teach English to a very high level here and we will meet with some teachers and children from the school who will give us some information about their hometown, give us a performance, and give us a chance to learn from these kids as well as helping them with a chance for conversation time with visitors - this is another Koryo Tours exclusive and something you will never forget
- After an early lunch we head to Semey Airport for a flight to [Almaty](#) - the former capital and the most charming city in the country
- We transfer to our hotel and you can head out for exploring, enjoying the very lively coffee shop scene, hot up some amazing restaurants and bars, pamper yourself at a beauty centre. Do whatever you like in this very modern but also laid-back place. You've earned it after the long journeys of the last few days!

**Overnight: Hotel Kazakhstan** – a towering monstrosity offering great views over the city as well as faded-luxury. An iconic structure in an iconic city; ideal for finishing off our Kazakhstan adventure

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Lunch

### **MAY 9<sup>th</sup> – THURSDAY (ALMATY/VICTORY DAY)**

- We embark on a walking tour of this amazing city - [Almaty](#). Nestled against the precipitous Tian Shan Mountain range and dotted with parks, theatres, boulevards, and much more. Sites we visit include...
- **Almaty Metro** – one of only two subway systems in the whole of Central Asia (the other is the Moscow knock-off in Tashkent) this system opened in 2012 and strikes a balance between Moscow opulence and modern efficiency
- **Green Bazaar & Rakhat Chocolate Factory** – these neighbouring sites are local institutions. You can smell the sweetness from the latter all across this part of the city. Banter and barter with sellers in the market, pick up the apples that Almaty is known for as well as all manner of other delicious

**The Experts in Travel to Rather Unusual Destinations.**

info@koryotours.com | +86 10 6416 7544 | www.koryotours.com  
27 Bei Sanlitun Nan, Chaoyang District, 100027, Beijing, China



local delicacies. Get your sweet tooth into action with the terrific and very affordable selection at the chocolate factory (ideal for gifts too!)

- **Panfilovets Park** – Almaty's main place of leisure. Very pleasant and marked with stunning and evocative monuments to the Kazakh soldiers who fell while fighting to defend Moscow from the Nazi invasion. **Zenkov Cathedral** is also located in this park.
- **Arbat Street** – every good former USSR town has one; a pedestrian area ideal for promenading, window shopping, café culture, public art sales, and so on. This one is very modern, and is lined with some great examples of brutalist apartment buildings.
- **Kok-Tebe** – a cable car ride up to a mountain overlooking the city. Amazing views, a statue of the Beatles, A Ferris Wheel and toboggan ride, small zoo, bars, and entertainment in general. Simply put, this is the city's best spot and a very popular area for local families, youths, and everyone really. We'll have a final lunch of the tour along the way. A fitting relaxing end to an intense, mind-blowing week!
- Today is also **Victory Day** – the anniversary of the German surrender to the victorious Red Army. Events are happening across the former USSR on this occasion, and whatever will be happening in Almaty, we will go along for a look. In true Soviet style, there will likely be a drink or two involved, plus some nostalgic nationalism to observe. The itinerary will change to adapt to whatever events are planned and possible to attend.

**Overnight: Hotel Kazakhstan**

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Lunch



## MAY 10<sup>th</sup> – FRIDAY (GOODBYE ALMATY – WELCOME ASHGABAT)

Today you travel between Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan - two fascinating and very different states in the same region. In terms of logistics, there are only occasional flights directly on this route - if one is available we will help you with that, but otherwise, the safer and most reliable route would be to fly via Istanbul or Dubai - two places well-connected several times daily to both Almaty and Ashgabat. Get in touch with us for help with planning this route.

You can make this journey all in one day, or arrive the following day, this will still get you there in time for the Turkmenistan tour to begin, so explore options and let us know what you think.

Arriving into Ashgabat/ Turkmenistan you pass through its multi-billion dollar marble-clad eagle-shaped airport - the kind of ostentatious building any country in the middle east would be proud of. Exchange the Letter of Invitation (LOI) we have sent you in advance for a visa on arrival and a pickup and transfer to the hotel will be provided along with a local guide.

This evening is free for your own short exploration or to relax into another exciting country.

Meals: **Breakfast,**

**Overnight:** Olympia Hotel, Ashgabat - Built for the 2017 Asian indoor martial arts game this well-located and modern hotel allows access to malls, shops, restaurants, and provides guests with quality facilities in a fascinating part of the city

## MAY 11<sup>th</sup> – SATURDAY (ASHGABAT)

A free day in Ashgabat - we can make recommendations for what to do and help to arrange drivers, guides as needed, for excursions outside of the city. Or you can simply wander, relax, go shopping, use leisure facilities and so on.

Ashgabat has malls, galleries, museums, and other sites open to visitors - just tell us what kind of thing you would like to do and our local partners and we can help with making a plan for you.

We also offer a walking tour for those arriving before the tour begins, taking in some of these parts of the city:

- Tekke Bazaar - Walk through this real, local slice of life, a true local market very popular amongst local people for shopping. On weekends there are also local booksellers in the park opposite selling a selection of second-hand books. If you're lucky, you may be able to pick up a copy of the

**The Experts in Travel to Rather Unusual Destinations.**

info@koryotours.com | +86 10 6416 7544 | www.koryotours.com  
27 Bei Sanlitun Nan, Chaoyang District, 100027, Beijing, China



Ruhnama the book written by Saparmurat Niyazov, the president of Turkmenistan. Niyazov famously said, *"a person that reads Ruhnama three times becomes smart, and after it, he will go straight to heaven"*.

- Inspiration Park - A public space in the centre of Ashgabat. This narrow parkland is lined with sculptures of regional poets, scholars and great thinkers all surrounding an artificial river and impressive colourfully illuminated water fountains.
- Russian Bazaar - located in the very centre of town, this covered market is where you can buy almost everything you may need in daily life; fruit & nuts, cables & chargers, sweets, kimchi, baked goods, souvenirs, and so on. Nearby is also the Altyn Asyr shopping centre, an excellent place to buy cotton goods, tracksuits, towels, bedsheets, etc. all made from local cotton, and all very cheap.
- Lenin statue - Best described as a small Lenin on a giant plinth decorated in central Asian tile work.
- Pushkin Monument - this small bust erected to Russia's most famous poet Alexander Pushkin is easily visited, a short walk from Lenin (for statue collectors there is an Ataturk and a Shenvchenko also nearby)
- Pervyy (first) Park - this is one of Ashgabat's oldest parks, founded in 1890. Previously named Officer Park, Lenin Park, and Independence Park.
- Ashgabat Railway Station - initially built-in 1888, the first railway station was destroyed in the earthquake of 1948 along with much of the city. A new station was built shortly after in 1950, however, this was remodelled in 2009, taking on its now-grand form crowned by the eight-pointed star (Rub El Hizb).

The tour starts properly this evening with a group dinner and orientation - meet those arriving just for the Turkmenistan part of the tour and get ready for a further group adventure!

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Dinner

**Overnight:** Olympia Hotel, Ashgabat

**The Experts in Travel to Rather Unusual Destinations.**

info@koryotours.com | +86 10 6416 7544 | www.koryotours.com  
27 Bei Sanlitun Nan, Chaoyang District, 100027, Beijing, China



## MAY 12<sup>th</sup> – SUNDAY (ASHGABAT)

- **Tolkuchka Bazaar** - The nation's largest market, built outside the city and home to various sections selling household goods, clothes, the famous Turkmen carpets, camels & other animals, and much more!
- **Ashgabat Hippodrome** - Sunday is a day at the races, with the sacred Ahal-Teke horses in full display.
- **Afternoon city tour** including Independence Park and Monument, Arch of Neutrality topped by the gold statue of Turkmenbashi, Ahal-Teke Horse Monument, Earthquake Monument and Museum.
- This evening is free for further exploration of Ashgabat.

Meals: **Breakfast, Lunch**

**Overnight:** Olympia Hotel, Ashgabat

## MAY 13<sup>th</sup> – MONDAY (DARVAZA GAS CRATER & BOKHURDAG)

- **Desert adventure!** We head off in a fleet of 4x4s into the deep desert today.
- **Bokhurdag:** This Semi-nomadic village affords us a great look at what desert life is like today. The visit here is made even better as we enjoy lunch in a local family home.
- Onwards to the bizarre mud and water craters, scenes of accidents that opened sinkholes in the desert.
- Finally, we arrive at the stunning and unforgettable [Darvaza Gas Crater](#) in the centre of the country and the scene of a 40-year-old industrial accident that ended with a giant flaming pit burning to this day. A hypnotic sight and one of the strangest and most spectacular things you can see.
- We camp tonight beside the crater; it is best seen at night. Dinner cooked on the spot.

Meals: **Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

**Overnight:** Camping at the Darvaza Gas Crater - Camping in the desert with tents, sleeping bags and roll mats provided. We will also provide tents based on your rooming options. Camping affords us the best opportunity to view the fantastic gas crater from before sunset to sunrise.

**The Experts in Travel to Rather Unusual Destinations.**

info@koryotours.com | +86 10 6416 7544 | www.koryotours.com  
27 Bei Sanlitun Nan, Chaoyang District, 100027, Beijing, China



## MAY 14<sup>th</sup> – TUESDAY (ASHGABAT)

- We return to Ashgabat, driving through the morning with a stop at a [monument to the Soviet defeat \(or suppression\) of the Basmachi Rebellion](#), guerillas who resisted first Russian Imperial and then Soviet rule in Central Asia.
- Once back in the capital the rest of the day is yours to do with as you please; explore, relax, shop, take a side-trip (drivers are available for hire), we and our local guides can advise on the spot.

Meals: **Breakfast**

**Overnight:** Olympia Hotel, Ashgabat

## MAY 15<sup>th</sup> – WEDNESDAY (DASHOGUZ & KONYE-URGENCH)

- We take a morning 1-hour flight from Ashgabat to the northern city of [Dashoguz](#), in the Uzbek-majority part of the country.
- We'll see the local bazaar and a taste of life in this very different city.
- The ancient silk road ruined city of [Konye-Urgench](#), ravaged by successive invaders over the centuries and now home to minarets, impressive mausoleums, and all manner of historical tales and stories – one of the most important sites on the old silk-road.

Meals: **Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

**Overnight:** Hotel Uzboy, Dashoguz - This local hotel may be basic although there are not many options in this far-flung town. It does offer us the chance to walk out into the local streets and experience life away from the marble city of Ashgabat.

## MAY 16<sup>th</sup> – THURSDAY (ASHGABAT & KOW ATA)

- We'll fly back to Ashgabat and get on with some more touring activities straight upon arrival.
- Ahal-Teke horses considered as heavenly and sacred beasts in Turkmenistan; this stud farm visit will show you why. Have a ride on one of the horses if you like.
- We then drive on to the bizarre [Kow-Ata underground lake](#). A Sulphur-heated lake 100m deep underground. Take a swim, explore the cave, and then have lunch at a shashlik restaurant on the spot.

**The Experts in Travel to Rather Unusual Destinations.**

info@koryotours.com | +86 10 6416 7544 | www.koryotours.com  
27 Bei Sanlitun Nan, Chaoyang District, 100027, Beijing, China



- After lunch, we will visit a couple of large mosques; first, the Geok Deppe Mosque, built on the site of a late 19th Century massacre that marked the beginning of Russian dominance in the region.
- Then we see the even more massive Gypjak Mosque, built on the site of the 1949 Earthquake that devastated the city; this is also home to the Turkmenbashi Mausoleum which we will visit.
- Back to the city for a relaxing evening before beginning the final day of this adventure!

Meals: **Breakfast, lunch**

**Overnight:** Olympia Hotel, Ashgabat

### **MAY 17<sup>th</sup> – FRIDAY (ASHGABAT & KOPET DAG MOUNTAINS)**

- Free morning in Ashgabat for any final shopping, wandering, or relaxing that you want to do, and then we meet for a packed last afternoon.
- **A cable car** ride into the Kopet Dag mountains to see a view of the city from above.
- The world's largest indoor Ferris Wheel – yes, indeed! A bizarre and quite fun trip to this oddity at the edge of town.
- An evening drive around the marble city, stopping at some viewpoints for some great photos of the nighttime illuminations which are very impressive.
- Final dinner of the tour, time for goodbyes and the last night out if you've got the energy!

Meals: **Breakfast, Dinner**

**Overnight:** Olympia Hotel, Ashgabat

**The Experts in Travel to Rather Unusual Destinations.**

info@koryotours.com | +86 10 6416 7544 | www.koryotours.com  
27 Bei Sanlitun Nan, Chaoyang District, 100027, Beijing, China



## **MAY 18<sup>th</sup> – SATURDAY (DEPARTURE DAY OR OPTIONAL EXTENSION)**

### **Departure day**

- Departure day – airport transfers provided for everyone regardless of the time of flight or where you are going

### **End of tour, OR;**

### **OPTIONAL EXTENSION (+550 EUR)**

#### **Extension day 1: Mary & Margush**

- Flight from Ashgabat to Mary, in the centre of the country and the nearest city to the ancient silk road metropolis of Merv.
- Visit **Gonur-Deppe** (Margush); another ancient city in this area, with some lovely extent architectural features.
- Back to [Mary City](#) and explore this modern town, mix with the locals, go to parks, bars, etc. as you like, a sleepy area with welcoming and friendly locals.

Meals: **Breakfast**

## **MAY 19<sup>th</sup> – SUNDAY (EXTENSION DAY 2: ANCIENT MERV)**

- Excursion to [Ancient Merv](#). Merv was once one of the most important cities in the world at certain times of its history. This ancient site is now a place where you will learn a great deal about the history of Central Asia, the rise and fall of dynasties and cities, the silk road, and human civilisation in this part of the world. Animals, travellers and archaeologists now roam the existing building, ruins, etc. All contribute to a sense of the dynamism of the ancient silk road.
- In the afternoon you fly back to Ashgabat for a final rest/night out before departure.

Please let us know if you wish to book an extra night in Ashgabat. The flight should return to the capital at around 8 - 9 PM.

**The Experts in Travel to Rather Unusual Destinations.**

info@koryotours.com | +86 10 6416 7544 | www.koryotours.com  
27 Bei Sanlitun Nan, Chaoyang District, 100027, Beijing, China



## TOUR PACKAGE

### INCLUDED

- English-speaking local guides
- Western Tour Leader
- Meals (where indicated)
- Accommodation
- Internal flights
- Internal trains
- All included sightseeing
- All taxes & entrance fees to areas where special permits are required
- Airport transfers
- An amazing time!

### NOT INCLUDED

- Tips for the local guides and driver (approx 10-15 USD per day)
- Incidentals, extra drinks, etc
- Optional single supplement (USD 40 per night in Kazakhstan, USD 50 per night in Turkmenistan)
- Kazakhstan visa fee (where appropriate). Some nationalities will not require a visa for Kazakhstan. Please check in advance.
- Turkmenistan: All visitors will need a visa USD 80 to USD 140 depending on nationality, we will do the work required.
- International flights to Kazakhstan and from Ashgabat
- Flight between Almaty and Ashgabat - we can assist with recommendations for this route

## ADDITIONAL NOTES

- Please note that when on tour your day-to-day itinerary may differ to what is advertised above. Your tour leader will ensure, however, that everything available at the time is covered, and replacement options are provided where needed. We will also add in extras when there is time (such as a visit to a local bar or amusement park).
- After the tour, we will send out a list of all participants' emails so you can keep in touch, swap photos etc. If you do not wish to be on this list, then please let us know.

**The Experts in Travel to Rather Unusual Destinations.**

info@koryotours.com | +86 10 6416 7544 | www.koryotours.com  
27 Bei Sanlitun Nan, Chaoyang District, 100027, Beijing, China